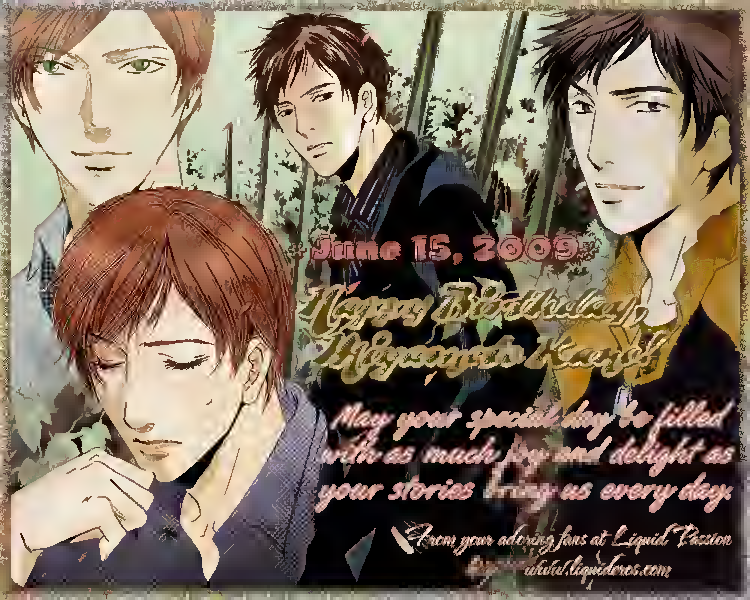
Hiromi Kan
Under the Cherry Trees
PC: Ashcat
Scanner: Reppu
Translation: Sandyoo
Proofreader: Ashcat & Grayunderpants
Editor: Grayunderpants
QC: Ashcat & Rangiku
Liquid Passion
http://www.liquidpassion.com
#liquidpassion@irc.irchighway.net


June 15, 2009
Happy Birthday,
Hagasaki Kei!
May your special day be filled
with as much joy and delight as
your stories bring us every day.
From your adoring fans at Liquid Passion
www.liquidpassion.com

Under the Cherry Trees

Miyamoto Kano has drawn a two-page colour manga illustrating part of the classic Japanese story, "Sakura no Kimo Shita ni wa" (Under the Cherry Trees). In order for the short manga to make sense, some background knowledge on the novel is included below.

Under the Cherry Trees is a famous, poetic short story written in 1925 by the Japanese author Motojirou Kajii. According to this story, the reason why Cherry blossoms are so beautiful is because there are dead bodies buried underneath the trees.

The opening of the story (especially the first line) is often quoted by Japanese when they go to view the cherry blossoms in spring.

"Dead bodies are buried under the cherry trees! You have to believe it. Otherwise, you couldn't possibly explain the beauty of the cherry blossoms. I was restless lately because I couldn't believe in this beauty. But I have now finally understood. 'dead bodies are buried under the cherry trees'. You have to believe it."

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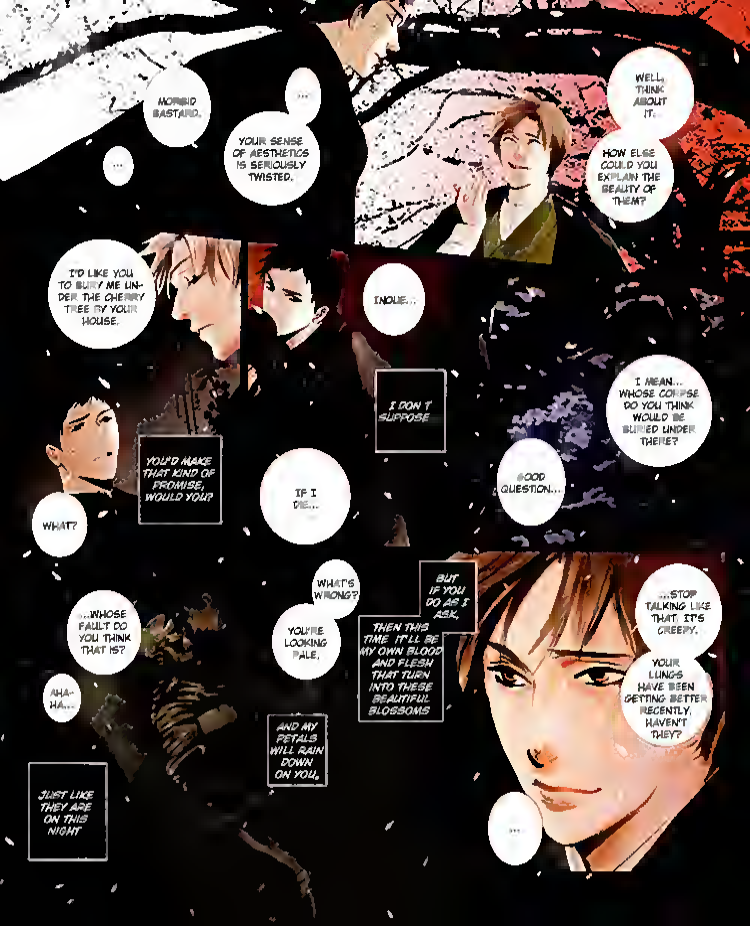
I WAS JUST ADMIRING THE NIGHT-TIME BLOSSOMS.
SORT OF.
SORT OF.
HAVE YOU HEARD?
HMM.
NAKAMURA'S BEEN MISSING FOR DAYS. NO ONE KNOWS WHERE HE'S GONE.
HEARD WHAT?
HEY, FUJISAKI.
SO THIS IS WHERE YOU'VE BEEN HIDING?
HN...
DON'T YOU EVER FEEL LIKE THERE MIGHT BE DEAD BODIES BURIED UNDER THE CHERRY TREES?
HUH?
OH...
HE'S PROBABLY JUST GONE TO SPEND SOME TIME BY THE HOT SPRINGS IN HAKONE OR SOMEWHERE.
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD ANYTHING FROM HIM?
I MEAN, YOU'RE CLOSER TO HIM THAN ANYONE.
THOUGH, I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU TWO TALKING TOGETHER IN A WHILE...


MORBID BASTARD.
...
YOUR SENSE OF AESTHETICS IS SERIOUSLY TWISTED.
...
WELL, THINK ABOUT IT...
HOW ELSE COULD YOU EXPLAIN THE BEAUTY OF THEM?
I'D LIKE YOU TO BURY ME UNDER THE CHERRY TREE BY YOUR HOUSE.
INOUE...
I DON'T SUPPOSE
I MEAN... WHOSE CORPSE DO YOU THINK WOULD BE BURIED UNDER THERE?
YOU'D MAKE THAT KIND OF PROMISE, WOULD YOU?
IF I DIE...
GOOD QUESTION...
WHAT?
WHAT'S WRONG?
BUT IF YOU DO AS I ASK,
...STOP TALKING LIKE THAT. IT'S CREEPY.
...WHOSE FAULT DO YOU THINK THAT IS?
YOU'RE LOOKING PALE.
THEN THIS TIME IT'LL BE MY OWN BLOOD AND FLESH THAT TURN INTO THESE BEAUTIFUL BLOSSOMS
YOUR LUNGS HAVE BEEN GETTING BETTER RECENTLY, HAVEN'T THEY?
AHA-HA...
AND MY PETALS WILL RAIN DOWN ON YOU,
...
JUST LIKE THEY ARE ON THIS NIGHT